

# RUN, THAT YE MAY OBTAIN

1 Cor 9:24-27

Paul used imagery of athletic events to make a point in his letters.  
Corinthians familiar with Greek Olympic Games ... Isthmian Games.  
Athlete must be disciplined if going to excel.  
While others are messing around, he is practicing.  
Regimen...diet ...sleep  
Learned to say no to good and better and *yes* to best.

## Things in common:

Disciplined life

Goals

Trials

Aches and pains

Criticized

Olympic games/athletic events go back to first century – every 2-4 years.

Olympic games: wreath of Olive

Delphi games: wreath of Apple

Isthmian games: ...wreath of Pine

Nemean games: wreath of Parsley

5 events : jumping, throwing the discus, racing, boxing, wrestling.

National and religious events.... free men could enter.

## Program:

M.C. Announce representative and country

Winner receive fancy crown

Return home: breach in the wall

Not pay taxes.

Salary from public treasury.

## Strict Requirements (Epictetus)

Strict regimen

Unpleasant food

Abstain from delicacies.

Exercise self at prescribed times in heat and cold

No wine

Put self under a coach.

A victorious, successful, Christian life not come by accident.

Involves effort, discipline, and self-denial.

## 1. EVERY CHILD OF GOD IS A RUNNER. 1 Corinthians 9:24

No choice

Goal? Perfect holiness.

Prize: Glory – crown of holiness

Galatians 5:7; Philippians 3:14; Hebrews 12:1-2

## **2. RUN TO OBTAIN AND INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN 1 Corinthians 9:25**

**Jim Elliott:** *He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. Incorruptible crown:* Won't perish, rust, deteriorate. Always valuable. Eternal value.

*Godet: During the 10 months before the day of the games, the competitors lived in sustained exercises and with special self-denial, abstaining from everything that could exhaust or weight the body. ...the Christian's self-denial should bear, not only on guilty pleasures, but on every habit, on every enjoyment which, without being vicious, may involve a loss of time or a diminution of moral force.*

30 days before competition, contestants required to show up at gymnasium.

If met requirements ... allowed to compete publicly.

*Wiersbe: ...there is something to be said for disciplined eating, exercising, and resting, and a Spirit-directed balanced life. We smugly congratulate ourselves that we do not smoke or use alcohol, but what about our overeating and overweight? And so many Christians cannot discipline their time so as to have a consistent devotional life or Bible-study program.*

## **1 Corinthians 9:26**

***Beateth the air:*** To live ineffectually.

***So fight I.*** The Christian life is a fight. A battle. Sometimes you have to look up to see bottom..... 2 Corinthians 6:5; 2 Corinthians 11:23-27; Acts 20:34-35

## **3. HE MUST KEEP HIS BODY UNDER SUBJECTION.**

**1 Corinthians 9:27** J.B.Phillips, Letters to Young Churches: *I am no shadow-boxer, I really fight! I am my body's sternest master, for fear that when I have preached to others I should myself be disqualified.*

***Keep under my body:*** to strike under eyes, so as to make blue wounds.

***Subjection:*** be a slave-driver;

*Godet: As the victor led the vanquished round the arena, amid the plaudits of the spectators, so Paul, after breaking the opposition of his body, leads it like a submissive servant before the face of the world in the labours of the apostleship*  
*Learn to say "no" to fleshly desires*

Hebrews 12:4; Matthew 5:29; Romans 13:14; 1 Peter 2:11

Bodies must be made to serve mind and spirit!

Holy Spirit help us. Galatians 5:22 -25

**Galatians 5:23** <sup>23</sup>Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

***Castaway:*** disapproved, disqualified, red-card.

Paul's fear--become so engrossed in helping others in their races and forget his own ...disqualified.

Greatest battle in spiritual life? God put us on shelf...take us out of place of opportunity and use somebody else.

Because we not efficiently run race.

Redpath: *It is possible for a child of God to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, yet to be mastered by the flesh. It is possible for appetites and indulgence, all the claims of the body, to rule the life of the child of God.*

## SO WHAT?

**1 Corinthians 9:24** No-brainer. A lot of people run races. Not all get first place. Run in your spiritual life as someone who wants to win the prize.

**1 Corinthians 9:25** If want to succeed in spiritual life, must have element of self-control.

**1 Corinthians 9:26** Connect. Purpose in your life.

**1 Corinthians 9:27** Make your body your slave instead of you its slave.

Then, testimony lasting.... Not disqualified in the ministry.